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The Rituals of Infinity

The **Inklings Group**'s plan to save the Lamb and Flag in Oxford – one of the original Inklings' regular pubs, closed by coronavirus in 2021 (see *Ansible* 412) – has succeeded. It reopened on 7 October. (BBC)

Brian Stableford dismayed me with a news release: 'Following an illness Brian Stableford spent two months in hospital with kidney failure. Since release is unable to read, write or walk (or type). Not yet dead but might as well be. RIP.' (Email, 19 October) A later and more cheery message notes that he has very good carers. Hoping for better news....

Borys Sydiuk of Kyiv expressed his dismay that 'Wordcon-2023's GoH Sergei Lukianenko celebrates the Russian missile attack on Ukraine and hails the murder of Ukrainian civilians. / The Russian young-adult SF author Sergei Lukianenko says in his post that all Ukrainians are fascists and should be murdered. After the mass attack of Russian terrorists on Ukrainian cities and civilian infrastructure on October 10, he made a post hailing the destruction of power plants, heat suppliers, and other civilian infrastructure: "Finally, I wish it would be so in February, deliberately and ruthlessly, fascist scum should go to hell," meaning all Ukrainians.' (Facebook, 12 October) Even Western members of the Chengdu Worldcon committee prefer not to comment on their guest's fulminations. Of the remaining guests, Liu Cixin of China has publicly supported Chinese mass internment of Muslim Uighurs in Xinjiang while Canada's Robert Sawyer seems blithely unconcerned about sharing a platform with the other two.

Cecilia Tan was sceptical about email from 'E C Publishing LLC' offering to 'introduce your book to literary agents, booksellers, and major traditional publishing companies' (false assumptions being that Tan has no agent and is self-published), and announced this scepticism on Twitter. A mere eight months later came a stropmy text message, from the EC Legal Team: 'You have between 24 and 48 hours to delete your post; otherwise legal action will be taken.' Tan's query 'Is it normal for a "legal team" to threaten via text?' was met with a chorus of negatives (Twitter, 28 October). Writer Beware looked at EC in a post on 'Junk Book Marketing' (April 2022). For \$499 they'll put two books on a shelf: exposure!

Congeries

4-6 Nov • **Armadacon 2022**, Future Inns, Plymouth. £35 reg; £30 concessions. More at www.armadacon.org.

11-14 Nov • **Camp SFW**, Vauxhall Holiday Park, Great Yarmouth. Tickets £120. See www.scifiweekender.com.

11-13 Nov • **Novacon 51**, Palace Hotel, Buxton. £51 reg; couples (wait for it) £102; under-17s £12; under-13s free. Day rates £15 Friday; £25 Saturday; £20 Sunday. No sales at the door. See novacon.uk.

12-13 Nov • **Comic Con**, Harrogate Convention Centre. Part of the 7-13 November Thought Bubble comics festival. £30 weekend; £19/day; under-12s, over-65s and carers free. See thoughtbubblefestival.com.

19-20 Nov • **Steampunks in Space**, National Space Centre, Leicester. £16.95; child/concessions £13.95. See tinyurl.com/bdffvs3d.

27 Nov • **Stars of Time** (media), Tropicana, Weston-super-Mare. 10am-4:30pm. £9; under-12s, OAP and disabled £5; under-4s free. Family of 2+2 children £22; 2+3 £24. See www.starsoftime.co.uk.

3 Dec • **Dragonmeet** (gaming), Novotel Hammersmith, London. 9am-11pm. Ticket prices awaited at www.dragonmeet.co.uk.

3-4 Dec • **For the Love of Sci-Fi** (media), BEC Arena, Stretford, Manchester. £41.25; under-10s £13.20. More at fortheloveofsci-fi.com.

3-4 Dec • **When It Changed: Women in SF/F Since 1972** (online conference). £45 reg; £30 concessions; day rates £30 and £20. See the 2 September post at sf-foundation.org/fresh-about.

25-26 Feb 2023 • **Surrey Steampunk Convivial**, Stoneleigh, Epsom. See bumpandthumper.wixsite.com/steampunkconvivial.

7-10 Apr 2023 • **Conversation** (Eastercon), Hilton Metropole, Birmingham NEC. Now £80 reg; £45 concessions; £40 supp/online only. Under-18s still £20 and under-13s £5. See conversation2023.org.uk.

22-23 Apr 2023 • **Sci-Fi Scarborough** (multimedia), The Spa, Scarborough. Details are awaited at scificarborough.co.uk.

10-12 May 2023 • **GIFcon 2022** (Glasgow University online

conference), 'Boundaries and Margins'. See tinyurl.com/472fpk3c.

26-28 May 2023 • **Satellite 8**, Crowne Plaza, Glasgow. £70 reg; under-25s £60; under-18s £20; under-12s £5; under-5s £2. *These rates may rise on 1 December*. See eight.satellitex.org.uk.

2 Jul 2023 • **Tolkien Society Seminar**, Leeds Hilton and online. Free. See www.tolkienesociety.org/events/seminar-2023/.

31 Aug - 2 Sep 2023 • **Oxonmoot** (Tolkien Society), St Anne's, Oxford. This is the fiftieth Oxonmoot. Membership rates and online booking awaited at www.tolkienesociety.org/events/oxonmoot-2023/.

15-17 Sep 2023 • **Fantasycon 2023**, Jury's Inn Hotel, Broad St, Birmingham. Now £81.50 reg; students £66; under-16s £41 (BFS members £10 less); under-4s free. See www.hwsevents.co.uk/shop-2.

23-24 Sep 2023 • **Nor-Con** (media), Norfolk Showground Arena. Ticket sales awaited at www.nor-con.co.uk.

31 May - 2 Jun 2024 • **FunCon One**, Palace Hotel, Buxton. Still £55 for early-bird membership, *rising to £60 on 1 December*. See funcon.lol.

Rumblings. *London First Thursdays*. The Bishop's Finger pub is now booked to the end of 2023; the extra Christmas 2022 meeting is on 15 December. [RR] • *The 32nd UK Filk Con*, planned for February 2023, will not be held: hotel lost and no replacement found, while costs seem likely to become prohibitive. • *Octocon 2023* is taking memberships – adults €60 – at octocon.com; dates and venue (presumably Dublin) are awaited.

Infinitely Improbable

As Others Cite Harry Potter. 'Being Tory Leader is like being Defence Against the Dark Arts teacher: every idiot fancies a go, nobody lasts long, and there's a good chance you'll bump into Voldemort's soul.' (Russ Jones, Twitter, 20 October)

Awards. *Arthur C. Clarke: Deep Wheel Orcadia* by Harry Josephine Giles. • *Booker Prize: The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida* by Shehan Karunatilaka, a supernatural novel. • *Ditmar* (Australia) best novel: *The Bridge* by J.S. Breukelaar. • *Kitschies: NOVEL The Galaxy, and the Ground Within* by Becky Chambers. DEBUT *Temporary* by Hilary Leichter. COVER ART Julia Lloyd for *The Seep* by Chana Porter. SPECIAL Comma Press for anthology series. • *Shirley Jackson: NOVEL My Heart Is a Chainsaw* by Stephen Graham Jones. NOVELLA *Flowers for the Sea* by Zin E. Rocklyn. NOVELETTE 'We, the Girls Who Did Not Make It' by E.A. Petricone (*Nightmare* 2/21). SHORT 'You'll Understand When You're a Mom Someday' by Isabel J. Kim (*khoroé* 8/21). COLLECTION *Folk Songs for Trauma Surgeons* by Keith Rosson. ANTHOLOGY (tie) *Professor Charlatan Bardot's Travel Anthology* ed. Eric J. Guignard; *Unfettered Hexes* ed. dave ring. SPECIAL Ellen Datlow for *When Things Get Dark*. [TM] • *Ursula K. Le Guin Prize* (inaugural): *The House of Rust* by Khadija Abdalla Bajaber.

The Clarke Award's Twitter feed enjoyed a power gloat next day: 'How it started: Yesterday *Deep Wheel Orcadia* was somewhere like 281,000 in Amazon book rankings. / How it's going: Right now it's in the Top 500 and crushing it in the poetry bestsellers!' (27 October)

Publishers and Sinners. Penguin Random House's merger with Simon & Schuster has been blocked by a US federal court as likely 'substantially to lessen competition'. (*Publishers Weekly*, 31 October) [AIP]

As Others See Us. 'Stories of the supernatural have been supplanted by "science fiction." Though the talent of H.G. Wells did in that genre nearly everything worth undertaking, a flood of "scientific" and "futuristic" fantasies continues to deluge America. With few exceptions, these writings are banal and meaningless.' (Russell Kirk, 'A Cautionary Note on the Ghostly Tale' in *The Surly Sullen Bell*, 1962) [LP]

R.I.P. *Jeff Barnaby*, Canadian film-maker who wrote and directed the zombie movie *Blood Quantum* (2019), died on 13 October aged 46. [SJ] • *Jules Bass* (1935-2022), US producer, director and composer with many genre credits from *The New Adventures of Pinocchio* (1960) via *The Hobbit* (1977) and *The Last Unicorn* (1982) to *Thundercats* (1985, 2011, 2020), died on 25 October aged 87. [PDF] • *Robert Brown* (1926-2022), US actor in *The Flame Barrier* (1958), *Tower of London* (1962) and *Primus* (1971-1972), died on 19 September aged 95. [LP] • *Michael Callan* (1935-2022), US actor in *Frasier*, *the Sensuous Lion* (1973), *Dark Dreams* (1993), *Leprechaun 3* (1995) and genre tv series including *Superboy* (1989-1992),

died on 10 October aged 86. [LP/O] ● **Robbie Coltrane** (1950–2022), popular Scots comedian and actor known for much more than playing Hagrid in all the Harry Potter films (2001–2011), died on 14 October aged 72. Further genre credits include *Krull* (1983), *Blackadder's Christmas Carol* (1988), *Slipstream* (1989), *GoldenEye* (1995), *Gooby* (2009), and *The Gruffalo* (2009). ● **Albert E. Cowdrey** (1933–2022), US author active since 1968 whose 2001 story 'Queen for a Day' won a World Fantasy Award and whose sf novel is *Crux* (2004), died on 21 August aged 88. [GVG] ● **Ned Dameron** (1943–2022), US sf/fantasy artist active from the 1970s who created many covers for Donald M. Grant and Underwood-Miller plus other publishers, died on 20 October aged 79. [SJ] ● **Mike Davis** (1946–2022), US urban theorist and author whose books for children include *Land of the Lost Mammoths: A Science Adventure* (2004), died on 25 October aged 76. [AIP] ● **Drew Ford**, writer of the graphic novel *Steam* (2020) and founder of It's Alive Press – devoted to republishing out-of-print comics – died on 1 October. [LP] ● **Leslie Jordan** (1955–2022), US actor in *Undead or Alive* (2007), *American Horror Story* (2013–2019) and *The Last Sharknado* (2018), died on 24 October aged 67. [AIP] ● **Kim Jung-gi** (1975–2022), South Korean illustrator and comics artist, died on 3 October aged 47. [PDF] ● **Douglas Kirkland** (1934–2022), Canadian still photographer who worked on many genre films from *Fahrenheit 451* (1966) and *2001* (1968) to *Fantastic Four* (2005), died on 2 October aged 88. [SJ] ● **Wolfgang Kohlhaase** (1931–2022), German film director and screenwriter with a script co-credit for the Stanisław Lem-based *Der schweigende Stern* (*The Silent Star* aka *First Spaceship on Venus*, 1960), died on 5 October aged 91. [AM] ● **Michael Kopsa** (1956–2022), Canadian actor in *Mobile Suit Gundam* (1979 English dub plus spinoffs), *Fantastic Four* (2005), *Watchmen* (2009), *Rise of the Planet of the Apes* (2011) and others, died on 23 October aged 66. [PDF/LP] ● **Feliks W. Kres** (Witold Chmielecki, 1966–2022), award-winning Polish fantasy writer active since 1991, whose novels include the 'Book of the Whole' sequence, died on 13 October aged 56. [AM] ● **Günter Lamprecht** (1930–2022), German actor with a genre credit for *Welt am Draht* (*World on a Wire*, 1973), died on 4 October aged 92. [AIP] ● **Dame Angela Lansbury** (1925–2022), UK-born actress best known for *Murder, She Wrote*, whose genre credits include *The Manchurian Candidate* (1962), *Bedknobs and Broomsticks* (1971), *The Company of Wolves* (1984), *Beauty and the Beast* (1991) and *The Grinch* (2018), died on 11 October aged 96. [LP] ● **Gene Levy**, US producer of *Hysterical* (1982) and *Waterworld* (1995), died on 15 October. [SJ] ● **Loretta Lynn** (1932–2022), noted US country music singer with soundtrack credits for genre tv series, games, and films including *The New Mutants* (2020) and *Paranormal Activity: Next of Kin* (2021), died on 4 October aged 90. [PDF/LP] ● **Tom Maddox** (1945–2022), US cyberpunk author with a 1985 debut in *Omni*, whose sf novel was *Halo* (1991), died on 18 October. [PDF] ● **Robert (Bob) Madle** (1920–2022), US fan and book dealer active since the mid-1930s – the last surviving member of First Fandom – died on 8 October aged 102. [CP] He was at the first Worldcon in 1939, won TAFF in 1957 (publishing his trip report as *A Fake Fan in London*) and was fan guest of honour at the 1977 Worldcon. ● **Andrey Martynov** (1973–2022), Russian sf/fantasy writer whose 60 novels include 32 (pseudonymous) about Conan the Barbarian, died on 30 October aged 49. [AM] ● **Ron Masak** (1936–2022), US actor in *Laserblast* (1978), *The Aliens Are Coming* (1980), *Angels on Tap* (2018) and others, died on 20 October aged 86. [SJ] ● **Jill Pinkwater** (1941–2022), US author and illustrator whose drawings appeared in many children's chapbooks and picture books by her husband Daniel Pinkwater, died on 4 October aged 81. [PDF] ● **Jan Rabson** (1954–2022), US voice actor in *Akira* (1988), *Toy Story* (1995 plus sequels) and many more, died on 14 October aged 68. [SJ] ● **Larry Rew** (1947–2022), UK actor whose films include *The Fellowship of the Ring* (2001) and *Underworld: Rise of the Lycans* (2009), died on 5 August aged 75. [AIP] ● **Delia Rossi** (1980–2022), Russian author of 20 romantic fantasy novels, died on 14 October. [AM] ● **Eileen Ryan** (1927–2022), US actress in *Eight Legged Freaks* (2002) and *Feast* (2005), died on 9 October aged 94. [LP] ● **Peter Siragusa** (1955–2022), US voice actor in *Dinosaur* (2000) and *Cloudy with a Chance of Meatballs* (2009), died on 11 October aged 67. ● **Austin Stoker** (1930–2022), Trinidad-born actor in *Horror High* (1973), *Battle for the Planet of the Apes* (1973), *Time Walker* (1982) and genre tv series, died on 7 October aged 92. [PDF] ● **Judy Tenuta** (1949–2022), US actress in *Monsters on Main Street* (2014), *Scales: Mermaids are Real!* (2017) and *There's No Such Thing as Vampires* (2020), died on 6 October aged 72. [LP] ● **Dennis Virkler** (1941–2022), US film editor with many genre credits from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1973) via *Independence Day* (1983) and *The Chronicles of Riddick* (2004) to *The Wolfman* (2010), died on 15 September aged 80. [SJ] ● **Jeff Weiss** (1940–2022), US actor in *Mr Destiny* (1990), died on 18 September aged 82. [PDF] ● **Ted White** (1926–2022), US actor and stuntman (not the fan,

author and editor) behind Jason's mask in *Friday the 13th: The Final Chapter* (1984), died on 14 October aged 96. Other films include *Escape from New York* (1981) and *Starman* (1984). [SJ] ● **Ian Whittaker** (1928–2022), UK actor in *Revenge of Frankenstein* (1958) and *Frankenstein Unbound* (1990) – also a set decorator for *Alien* (1979) – died on 16 October aged 94. ● **Jay Wilburn**, US horror and YA fantasy author whose first book was *The Dragonfly and the Siren* (2013) with T. Fox Dunham, was reported in October as having died. [PDF] ● **Ralf Wolter** (1926–2022), German actor with genre credits for *Dracula Blows His Cool* (1979) and the tasteful *Killer Condom* (1996), died on 14 October aged 95. [SJ]

The Weakest Link. Q: 'Which children's author was named after the explorer Roald Amundsen?' A: 'Enid Blyton.' (ITV, *The Chase*) ● Q: 'In the films *Frankenstein* and *Bride of Frankenstein*, which Boris played Frankenstein's monster?' A: 'Boris Johnson.' (BBC1, *The Tournament*) [PE]

Random Fandom. *Corflu 39 Awards:* Geri Sullivan for life achievement and Claire Brialey as past president of fwa (now, echoing the recent SFWA name change, 'fan writers association' rather than 'fan writers of America'). Corflu also published *Jiant Shoulders*, a fanthology of FAAn life achievement award winners downloadable from corflu.org/Corflu39/. ● *Maureen Kincaid Speller's* funeral ceremony on 20 October had a surprise visitor, a local cat that for some while sat near the coffin surveying the audience. The consensus was that Maureen would have liked that. [PK]

As Others Ponder Us. 'It's not hyperbole to say that sci-fi, fantasy, and horror remain chained in the dungeon of the literary meritocracy. But why? Why is speculative fiction considered inferior or unequal?' (Kurt Fawver, 'The Inevitability and Impossibility of Escapism in Speculative Fiction', *Academia Letters*, April 2021) [IN]

Dark Net. Study of *SF Encyclopedia* web traffic reveals that somewhere out there is a bot that visits the entry for The Grateful Dead every five minutes, day and night, world without end. But why?

The Dead Past. *70 Years Ago*, Roger Dard hailed Australia's new Minister for Customs: 'Operation Fantast [Ken Slater's fanzine] has been banned, and as O.F.'s Australian representative I was raided by the police, on Customs orders, and subjected to a thorough interrogation. Genial, lovable Senator O'Sullivan meanwhile is joyously banning books which were never banned before in our history [...]. *Alice in Wonderland*, Campbell's *Who Goes There?*, and all of A. Merritt's books have already had the axe fall on them. We expect *Grimm's Fairy Tales* to go at any time. / So you see, if any of you oppressed fans over there in the UK wanna know the joys of living in a really free country, why, just come to Australia.' (*Post War: Science Fantasy News* letters supplement, Winter 1952) ● *40 Years Ago*, the magazine climate was happier: 'Interzone is now being guaranteed against loss, to the tune of £2000 promised by the Arts Council (in this present financial year)...' (*Ansible* 30, November 1982)

As Others See Others. Hilary Mantel's recent death led to a reminder that sf isn't the only genre regarded as needing uplift: 'Mantel's trilogy, which earned her two Booker Prizes, reimagined historical fiction as high literature.' (*New York Times* news quiz, 30 September) [RM]

Fanfundery. TAFF. Nominations are open (closing on 4 December) for a westbound race from Europe to Pemmi-con, the NASFiC or North American SF Convention in Winnipeg, Canada, July 2023. Voting runs from 9 December to 11 April. Official release at taff.org.uk. ● *Free Ebooks.* Current projects include *TAWF Times Two*, a joint volume of Walt and Madeleine Willis's reports on their Tenth Anniversary Willis Fund trip to the 1962 Worldcon. Coming soon at taff.org.uk/ebooks.php?all.

Chog's Flasterclass. *Erotica Dept, or All Thumbs.* "Christian Grey put his thumb in my mouth. And then the other one. And then two more. "Wider," he said as he put in one more. "I bet you've never had this many thumbs in your mouth." I hadn't.' (E.L. James, *Fifty Shades of Grey*, 2011) ● *Something to Watch Over Me.* 'Under this sneeringly vigilant sky, Clements and Robertson stood bewildered.' (Russell Kirk, 'Skyberia', *Queen's Quarterly*, 1952) [LP] ● *The Art of Understatement, or Cheese at Supper.* 'Shrieking, slithering, torrential shadows of red viscous madness chasing one another through endless, ensanguined corridors of purple fulgurous sky ... formless phantasms and kaleidoscopic mutations of a ghoulish, remembered scene; forests of monstrous overnourished oaks with serpent roots twisting and sucking unnameable juices from an earth verminous with millions of cannibal devils; mound-like tentacles groping from underground nuclei of polypous perversion ... insane lightning over malignant ivied walls and demon arcades choked with fungous vegetation ...' (H.P. Lovecraft, 'The Lurking Fear', 1923)